Use this guide to evaluate unit plans you are thinking of using, or to assess and improve instructional plans you develop yourself.  
  
**An Exemplary Unit Plan:**  
  
**Addresses important content**

* The subject matter is fundamentally important and worthy of students' time and attention. Lesson objectives align with content standards.
* Learning objectives are explained through essential and guiding questions. These questions help to focus students' attention on meaningful activities that lead to desired learning.
* The plan promotes higher-order thinking processes (interpretation, synthesis, prediction, and evaluation).

**Is designed for success**

* Teaching and learning activities, student products, and assessment tools directly reflect the learning objectives.
* The unit plan is structured yet flexible.
* Adequate structure ensures that learning objectives are addressed, while flexibility supports diverse interests and needs of students.
* The plan is student-centered. By design, it compels students to make choices as they plan their path to understanding.

**Is coherent, comprehensive, and usable**

* The learning objectives in the unit act as a unifying thread tying together teaching and learning activities, student products, and assessment.
* The unit plan is a well-developed guide for implementation, describing the entire instructional cycle from concept introduction to final assessment.
* The plan includes supporting resources (such as comparative work samples, schedules, task outlines, scoring guides and rubrics) to guide both teacher and students.

**Uses technology effectively**

* Technology use is engaging, age appropriate, beneficial to student learning, and supportive of higher-order thinking.
* Technology is integral to the success of the teaching plan and promotes greater engagement and deeper learning by:
  + Fostering new opportunities for interaction and collaboration with experts, peers, and people of different cultures or generations
  + Opening up unique learning opportunities, such as:
    - online learning communities
    - participation in real-time events beyond the classroom (example: National Geographic Society Jason Project
    - access to primary source materials (example: American Memories Project at the United States Library of Congress)
    - access to rich databases (example: seismic data at the United States Geological Survey)
  + Supporting new opportunities for expression and sharing, through email, desktop and Web publishing, and multimedia

**Supports assessment**

* The assessment tool draws a clear relationship between learning objectives and the learning activities that address those objectives.
* Instruments for assessment describe specific qualitative and quantitative performance criteria. When shared with students, these criteria help guide students' efforts.